REMARKS

Main claims 1 and 9 were amended to further emphasize the "external lighting" feature. These claims now recite that the external lighting is mounted on an exterior wall of the housing and project past the window mounted on the exterior wall. As described in the specification, for example, at page 5, lines 7-12, the external lighting is not part of the imaging module, but is incorporated into the housing.

By contrast, U.S. Patent No. 5,572,006 to Wang does not disclose any such external lighting. Wang discloses an internal lighting array consisting of perimeter illuminators 50, focusing illuminators 54, and exposure illuminators 54. All of these illuminators 50, 52, 54 are mounted inside the reader 10. Fig. 1B clearly shows no illuminator extending past the front window of the reader 10. Indeed, the "front window" is the central lens 56 (see Fig. 1C) operative for collecting light and imaging the collected light onto the sensor array 20.

The same is true for U.S. Patent No. 6,347,163 to Roustaei in which Figs. 2-3 clearly show no external lights projecting forwardly of the window.

By positioning the external lighting forwardly of the window, the light emitted from the external light does not directly impinge on the sensor array. Thus, the sensor array detects more of the light reflected from the target. Wang attempts to solve this interference problem by placing a filter 26 between the lens 56 and the sensor array (col. 6, lines 1-11). The filter 26 reduces the effect of ambient light. By contrast, applicant achieves ambient light immunity by forward placement of the external lighting.

Wherefore, a favorable action is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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